(c) if so, the efforts Government propose to make to save the Manas National Park?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) Yes Sir. As reported by the State, during insurgency, lot of destruction took place in the Manas National Park, which included killing of forest staff and damage to the infrastructure including flora and fauna.

(b) It has been reported that there is no confirmed sighting of rhino at present in Manas. While no estimation was carried out during 1987, the State reported 53 tigers in 1988-89. The population of tiger in the National Park during the last All India Estimation in 2001-02 was estimated by the State as 65.

(c) Under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of 'Project Tiger' , Central Assistance has been provided for restoring the park infrastructure, apart from taking up eco-development activities for the benefit of fringe villages.

(2) It is learnt, that subsequent to signing of an accord by the State Government with the extremist group, the Bodoland Territorial Council has been formed. The park is administered by the local Autonomous Council, which reportedly has taken it as their pride to develop and improve the same.

(3) The Government of Assam has also under taken a project for translocation of rhino to its original distribution area within the state (including Manas) with the support of national and international Non-Governmental Organisations and the US Fish & Wildlife Service

Environmental Degradation

635. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that level of environmental degradation is on the increase in the country;

(b) if so, the details in this regard for the last three years;

(c) whether it is a fact that large scale dependency on fossil fuel is a major cause of environmental degardation;

(d) if so, the details in this regard; and

(e) the measures contemplated to develop renewable sources of energy in a big way?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) and (b) Environmental degradation is caused by rapid growth of population, industrial pollution, unplanned urbanization and unsustainable production and consumption patterns. Area under forest and tree cover, quality of water resources, air quality etc; are some of the parameters for perceiving level of environmental degradation. The State of Forest Report 2003 indicates that the forest cover in the country is 678,333 km^2 and constitutes 20.64 per cent of its geographic area. A comparison with the forest cover assessment of 2001 receals an overall increase of 2,795 km^2 or 0.41 per cent in forest cover of the country. In so far as air quality is concerned, ambient concentrations of respirable suspended particulate matter (RSPM), the main pollutant of public health concern, appeared to fall between 1993 and 2002 in the metropolitan cities of Delhi, Kolkota, Mumbai, Hyderabad and Chennai. The level of sulphur dioxide (SO_2) also declined during the same period. However, suspended particulate matter (SPM) levels did not fall in proportion to RSPM.

The water quality monitoring results obtained by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) in collaboration with State Pollution Control Boards (SPCBs) during the past three years indicate that organic terms of biochemical oxygen demand (BOD) and coliform count gives the indication of extent of water quality degradation in different parts of our country. It had been found that 67% of the observations, out of nearly 3,000 observations are having BOD less than 3 mg/l, 18% between 3 to 6 mg/L and 15% above 6 mg/l. Similarly, total faecal coliform, which indicate presence of pathogens in water are also of major concern. In order to improve the water quality of the rivers, the Ministry is implementing the National River Conservation Plan by providing assistance to the State Governments.

(c) and (d) Emission of greenhouse gases resulting from use of fossil fuels is the main cause of human interference with the climate system. According to the India's Initial National Communication, energy, agriculture and industrial processes respectively contribute 61%, 28% and 8% of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO_2 equivalent) emissions. With a shift from

non-commercial energy, energy use is expected to further increase in India with substantial on fossil fuels including coal.

(e) The programmes under new and renewable energy sources include: power generation through wind, small hydro, biomass and solar energy; socially oriented programmes to meet rural energy demand such as the National Project on Biogas Development (NPBD) and the Integrated Rural Energy Progamme (IREP); solar energy programmes for applications like lighting, water heating, cooking and water pumping and research and development covering ocean energy, photovoltaic, hydrogen energy, fuel cells, and alternate fuels for surface transport.

Irregularities in Environmental Protection Training and Research institute

636. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO:
SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY:

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether his Ministry has come across various irregularities between 2001-04, as has been observed by the CAG, with regard to Environmental Protection Training and Research Institute;

(b) if so, the details of irregularities identified by the CAG; and

(c) what action his Ministry has taken on the culprits?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) No, Sir. The Institute is an autonomous organization under the administrative control of the Government of Andhra Pradesh. This MInistry provides fund to the Institute only on project basis.

(b) and (c) Does not arise.

Shutting down of wheat based industries

†637. SHRI PYARELAL KHANDELWAL: Will the Minister of FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES be pleased to state;

(a) whether it is a fact that several wheat and flour based industries

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.